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**Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
March 22, 2010**

**House Bill 5486, An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions
For Registered Sexual Offenders**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 5486, *An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions for Registered Sexual Offenders*. I would like to bring to the Committee's attention some concerns that we have with this bill, which would require convicted sex offenders to reside at least two thousand feet away from a school or child care center.

This bill would present a particular problem in our state's urban areas, where there are many schools and child care centers in close proximity. If enacted, this bill would actually have a detrimental impact on public safety because it would be more difficult for probation officers to monitor the whereabouts of sex offenders. Many shelters that currently house sex offenders would no longer be able to do so, resulting in an increase in the number of homeless offenders. Forcing offenders onto the streets will make it more difficult for probation to provide effective supervision, enhancing the possibility that offenders may recidivate.

Passage of this bill would also make integration into the community far more difficult, as offenders not rendered homeless would be forced to leave urban areas that offer treatment services, employment opportunities, and public transportation.

Finally, we would also respectfully note that a number of studies have been published that conclusively note that there is no evidence that residency restrictions

make communities safer. A 2008 study by Drs. Jill Levenson, Paul Zandbergen, and Timothy Hart noted, "[S]ex offenders who lived within closer proximity to schools and daycare centers did not reoffend more frequently than those who lived farther away." The report continued by stating, "[R]esidency restrictions greatly diminish housing options for sex offenders, resulting in increased homelessness, transience, and instability, undermining the very purpose of registries and exacerbating known risk factors for criminal recidivism."

For the above reasons, we respectfully request that the Committee take no action on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.